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## Memo

**To:** Member Associations & Clubs  
**From:** John Hopkins  
**Date:** 1 November 2011  
**Subject:** 2012 Changes to Rules of Golf & Rules of Amateur Status

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Dear All,

I am writing to you to outline the changes to the Rules of Golf and Rules of Amateur Status that were announced last week by The R&A. (The R&A is based in St Andrews, Scotland, and is the international governing body for the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Amateur Status.)

These changes are the outcome of The R&A's regular four-yearly review cycle that it operates in conjunction with the United States Golf Association. The changes will come into effect in Australia on 1 January 2012.

700,000 new Rule books have been printed for use in Australia. Details regarding distribution of these new books will be communicated to clubs by your State Association.

The R&A has advised that the Rules of Golf will remain fundamentally the same. Whilst an extensive review was conducted, what has come out of that was relatively modest.

The changes to the Rules of Amateur Status have emerged from a wide-ranging review performed by The R&A and the USGA. The R&A's Director of Rules and Equipment Standards, David Rickman has explained: "We felt the time was right to carry out a fundamental review of the Rules of Amateur Status. We were conscious that many sports had done away with amateur status rules and we felt that was an appropriate question for us to ask."

That an amateur code for golf is considered to be a key component of the game's future is strongly supported by GA. Amateur golf is almost unique in all of sport in that it is heavily reliant on a handicapping system which allows any golfer to compete on equal terms with any other golfer. Additionally, in virtually every amateur golf event, competition is reliant upon self-regulation as regards the Rules of play.

Uncontrolled sponsorship and financial incentive in the amateur game would provide significant temptation to players to manipulate scores and handicaps and to consequently diminish the competitive experience that is enjoyed by so many millions of players. As a result, GA sees the amateur status rules as a vital support mechanism for our handicapping system.

The key changes to the Rules of Golf and Rules of Amateur Status are listed in the document which accompanies this memo. For full details of all changes including a full series of video explanations, you should visit the GA website . [www.golfaustralia.org.au](http://www.golfaustralia.org.au) (go to **Rules & Handicapping** then **Rules & Competition Management** then **News & Communications**).

We hope this helps but please contact your State Association should you have any queries.

Kind regards,

**John Hopkins**  
Chairman of Golf Australia, Chairman of Rules & Handicapping Committee